RAGGED SCHOOL UNION QUARTERLY RECORD.

JANUARY, 1881.

"JESSICA'S SECOND PRAYER."

It was a happy inspiration which led the early promoters of Ragged Schools to form the Ragged School Union.

By it unity was given to what might otherwise have remained a series of isolated efforts, and it would be difficult fully to estimate how much this missionary enterprise owes to such incorporation.

There has been the strengthening union of heart and purpose without any diminution of individual zeal, well-directed teaching power, or spiritual influence. Full liberty of action was reserved for each school and mission under the conduct of its own committee, whilst the utmost was done by the Union to arouse public attention to the sad and neglected condition of poor children, to obtain and tabulate statistics, to disseminate information, to secure concerted action whenever desirable, to acquire the necessary funds, and generally by practical counsel and energising sympathy to sustain and extend the Ragged Schools of London.

Much, however, as has been done by God's blessing in these severally important ways to strengthen and to cheer those working zealously for the moral and spiritual well-being of the outcast, it has always been recognised that the main source of influence of the central body was derived from the pecuniary assistance afforded by its funds.

The monetary grants, regular and special, which have been made to the schools after careful investigation, and with full knowledge of the needs of each case, have been of inestimable service. Here and there the money received has been the means of saving a struggling effort, which, but for timely and liberal aid, must have succumbed. More frequently the grant has proved a

nest egg to which other golden eggs have been added by local friends for the relief of difficulty and debt. Moreover, buildings are rented, teachers engaged, repairs executed, books and school requisites purchased, and other responsibilities incurred, in the confidence of forthcoming help. Hence it is that the Committee always view with serious concern any falling-off in the resources of this Society, because they know that it bears only a relative proportion to the loss which will accrue to the 160 affiliated institutions.

From time to time in the past there have been seasons of urgent need, but whenever these have arisen and the fact been made public, the supplies have always been furnished. Such a time had again come, and it was the grateful remembrance of former hearty support, and the consciousness that it was for God's work the silver and the gold were needed, that encouraged the Committee to appeal once more to the liberality of the Christian public. There had been a gradual decline in the subscriptions and donations; many old friends had passed away, the love of some had waxed cold, and altogether the financial outlook was such as to justify the remark of Mr. Waddy, Q.C., at the annual meeting in May, that "unpleasant as the fact might be, we were going comfortably to the bad at the rate of £1,000 a year."

The small balance with which the financial year closed in March, 1880, was quickly absorbed, and in June the sum of £500 was withdrawn from a moderate reserve fund—the surplus of some legacies in the past—to be followed two months later by the necessary authority for the sale of £500 more.

After prayerful consultation, Lord Shaftesbury undertook to write a circular letter asking for the sorely needed aid, but it was deemed prudent to defer its issue until October. Meanwhile the gifted pen which had stirred the hearts of thousands by the pathetic account of "Jessica's First Prayer" and other stories was busily engaged in writing a plea on behalf of the neglected lambs of Christ's fold in the Ragged Schools.

The Religious Tract Society considerately gave wide publicity to Miss Hesba Stretton's "Second Prayer" through the pages of the "Sunday at Home," and added to their kindness by sanctioning the free use of it afterwards.

It was accordingly reprinted, and issued with our President's touching letter. In appending a copy of the letter and the paper we desire to record our sincere gratitude to Miss Stretton, the Religious

Tract Society, and the many friends, old and new, who have evinced their kind sympathy by a liberal response.

It is earnestly hoped that the number of contributors may yet be increased, and that all our readers will share with God the pleasure and blessing of aiding our humble endeavours to touch the hearts, to discipline the habits, to improve the morals, to awaken the intelligence, and to bless the souls of the destitute poor.

"The Ragged School Union, Exeter Hall, Strand,
"London, October, 1880.

"The accomplished authoress of 'Jessica's First Prayer' has now put forth a second, on behalf of the Ragged School Union. She writes, and speaks, as if she were the Jessica herself; and, in so doing, shows both the evil, and the remedy; the necessity, and the mode of meeting it. London abounds in little Jessicas, and, if we had but the means to get hold of them, we should exhibit, under God's blessing, as we have exhibited in thousands of instances before, that her fascinating tale was founded on truth, and that she displayed to the public happy and permanent results, which are still, if the effort be maintained, not only possible, but absolutely certain.

"I said 'if we had but the means.' That, however, is the only thing we have not. I refer simply to pecuniary means. The Living Agent is at hand. We have got many noble-hearted and capable men and women, ready for toil and self-denial, for any labour of love that may be imposed upon them in this work among the ignorant and the destitute. But oftentimes they are not many degrees richer than the classes they would befriend, and though prepared to give to the cause much of their time, their strength, their service, and their prayers, they have no surplus for rooms and lights, books, and coals, and the ten thousand minute and expensive details which wait on every endeavour to do any good whatever to these needy people.

"At the present time such is the statement before me; the yearly expenditure exceeds the income from all sources by more than one thousand pounds, and this has been the case for the last five or six years. Many of the smaller schools in the worst districts of London depend almost entirely upon the Union for funds to carry on the various enterprises for the moral and spiritual benefit of the very poorest and most neglected of the population.

"The continuance and extension of our operations will retain the activity of these worthy agents, and call into life the activity of many more. There is a vast amount of zeal, energy, talent, and earnest desire running to waste for want of employment. We may press it all into this grand channel, and so fertilise all these wide and barren fields of ignorance, vagrancy, and destitution. We are not trespassing on any other man's work; we are not entering into competition with other institutions; the ground is our own, and we are quite sure that, unless it be occupied after the fashion we propose, it will not be occupied at all. The classes are peculiar in their

thoughts, feelings, habits, actions, and they must be dealt with in a peculiar way. That way is not one which can be trodden by State officials and maintained by State moneys. The State is now doing its duty on a large scale, and no doubt with efficiency; we want to do ours on a smaller scale, and with the voluntary assistance of the public we shall do it quite as effectively.

"The palmy days of the Ragged School movement may never return. But the retrospect of them is consolatory and encouraging. We rose from five children in one school to more than thirty thousand in above two hundred; we adopted and followed the parental system, and rescued from the streets and placed in honest employment full three hundred thousand children, that would have otherwise been the pests and dangers of society.

"I have been requested to write this appeal, because I have been engaged in the work for more than forty years. It is not in the order of things that I should be able to write many more, and so I now venture to express a deep and ardent desire that means may be found to train these myriads of yet hopeful outcasts in the 'faith, and fear, and nurture of the Lord.'

"SHAFTESBURY.

"St. Giles' House, October 26, 1880."

"IS THERE ANY NEED NOW FOR RAGGED SCHOOLS?

"A QUESTION I have sometimes asked myself, and which I often hear asked by others. On every hand we see rising the large and convenient premises of the Board Schools, built wisely with an eye to the future; with their spacious playgrounds without, and within their wonderful educational appliances. How wonderful these appliances are can only be fairly known by a visit to the store-rooms of the School Board. These new schools are really places of education, thrown open by the State to all comers. Every child is not only free to enter, but by law is compelled to enter, or is supposed to have actually entered one of them. Where, then, is the place for Ragged Schools?

"It is hardly possible to walk for half an hour, even in a West End thoroughfare, to say nothing of the east and the north of London, without coming across a wretched child in rags, dirty rags, with uncombed and matted hair, whose bare feet are filthy with treading in gutters, and whose hands are grimy with turning over the refuse of the streets in search of food. The speech of this child, boy or girl, is as foul as its outward appearance; though it is no fault of its own that it knows little else but the oaths, the coarseness, the lies, and the indecency which the lowest language can utter. Can we take it and place it beside the little son or daughter of the decent workman, whose wife has sent her child to school clean and well clad, and often with as much care and pride in its training as mothers of a higher sphere? If we do this, though we may raise and civilise the corrupt street arab, what have we done for the innocent and uncorrupt little creature, his schoolfellow and playfellow, who has listened

o his oaths, his lies, and his ribaldry? We have done good to the one probably; but how much harm have we done to the other?

"Our Board Schools are palaces open to all comers, but they are not absolutely free. Those who cross the threshold must bring pence in their hands. In a few cases parents cannot spare the pence; in more numerous cases they will not. But still the children must pay if they go. To keep them away by hiding them or by mis-stating their age, is easier than to practise self-denial enough to save the small fee. It is not so with Ragged Schools, which are open to the very poor, as well as to the most abandoned, as Board Schools are not, and, perhaps, ought not to be. The lowest, the most needy and most miserable can creep in, and sit down on the benches of the Ragged School, with no fear of the scholars shrinking away from their touch, or the teacher's face clouding over at the sight of their wretchedness. All are penniless here; all out at elbows; all pinched more or less in the same fast clutch of poverty.

"It is this misery in itself which qualifies them for the benches in the Ragged Schools. Here can be done what it is almost impossible for a State school to do. Charity can feed and clothe and comfort these pinched and hungry little ones, though law cannot. The ratepayers could not provide a dinner for the children attending the rate-paid schools, nor clothe the naked, nor find shoes for the barefoot. Yet how much can a child learn who comes to school without breakfast, and who passes the dinner-hour, not in healthy play—the gnawing of hunger prevents that—but in crouching, sick and famished, in a corner of the playground, watching its happier comrades at their games? Not in Board Schools, but only in Ragged Schools, begun by love, and carried on for love of the most miserable, can the law of Christ come into full force; and He being an hungered can be fed by those who recognise Him in one of the least of these His little ones.

"The last report of the Ragged School Union lies before me. There are 160 schools, 51 of which are Day Schools, with 6,232 names on their books, and an average attendance of 4,898. Here, then, are over six thousand children, the very dregs of our alleys and slums, carefully gathered in, and gradually won from the fearful barbarism of our lowest classes, and to a certain degree trained into decent members of society—*our* society be it understood, in London, the head and heart of England. Those six thousand boys and girls would have been a probable source of contamination to the scholars, not so high above them as to be beyond their influence, who fill the benches of the Board Schools. Yet after a year or two of training in the Ragged School they may be safely drafted into them. But still more important than the Day School is the work done by the Sunday Ragged Schools, with an average attendance of 33,563 young people taken out of the streets at that most mischievous and dangerous time, the idle hours of a day spent usually out of doors, lounging upon the pavements and door-sills of our crowded courts. In the eastern division there is a total average of 14,000 Sunday scholars, a number equal to the population of a fair-sized town. And for this host of 33,563 scholars, there is a legion of very nearly 3,000 voluntary teachers giving their services

freely to a work often very discouraging to the mind, and always highly exhausting to the body.

"But quite apart from the work done in teaching, there are a number of invaluable agencies in connection with Ragged Schools altogether beyond the province of Board Schools, and impossible to be connected with them. There are Ragged Churches where the poor man in vile raiment is not bade to 'stand there,' whilst the man with a gold ring and in goodly apparel is invited to 'sit here in a good place.' There are Mothers' Meetings and Men's Clubs; the women generally meeting in the afternoon for sewing and reading, and the men having a quiet room to go to when their day's work is over. Penny Banks are kept, in which last year 23,763 persons deposited £11,570. Clothing Clubs are established, into which the poor themselves paid £1,557 last year.

"Then there are Nurseries for babies, Refuges for outcast children, and Homes for girls. There are Coal Clubs and Blanket Clubs and Shirt Clubs; Cricket Clubs, Drum and Fife Bands, and Brass Bands; Sick Loan Societies and Maternity Societies; Classes for Singing, Geometry, and Free-hand Drawing, and Swimming—all capital things—yearly exhibitions and flower shows. These and other agencies are always at work in connection with Ragged Schools, to catch first the street arab, and through him his miserable and degraded parents. Could the Board Schools do the same?

"In one of the most perfect of the Ragged Schools, which every one should visit, in George Yard, Whitechapel, conducted by Mr. George Holland, there is a special feature of interest in a class for teaching boys fretwork, carpentering, and turning. This is plainly a step in the right direction, and would immeasurably add to the importance of the work done by Ragged Schools, if it could be begun in all of them. Some time in the future we shall have Labour Schools; and it will be as unlawful for boys above thirteen to lounge idly about the streets as it is now for boys under thirteen to be playing in them during school hours. The voluntary, charity-founded Ragged Schools could point and lead the way in this, as they did in the education of the poor, if funds were only supplied. How many of the schoolrooms might be turned to account as workshops for classes who would learn cobbling, tailoring, carpentering, and similar handicrafts, which would teach the lads how to use their hands, and fit them to make splendid emigrants. Putting a trade into a boy's fingers, how much better is that than teaching him the geography of Asia or the history of the Saxon kings?

"Until we have wiped from the fair face of our dear country the two foul blots of pauperism and drunkenness, I think we cannot dispense with Ragged Schools. When every father is a steady workman, and every mother a clean and sober woman, then I can imagine the last Ragged School teacher locking, for the last time, the door of the empty school, and walking away with tears, perhaps, in his eyes, but with smiles on his lips, and profound joy in his heart. 'Our work is finished. There is no longer any need for our Union,' would be the most satisfactory report ever issued by the Ragged School Union. But how far we are from that happy day!

"Yet the funds of the Union are falling off. In many places, if the Ragged Schools go, there will go with them the Mothers' Meetings, the Shoe and Blanket Clubs, the Sick Loan and Maternity societies, the Flower Shows, and the Ragged Churches; all the agencies, in short, for looking after the children and their parents out of school.

"It is simply impossible to estimate the loss this would be in the constantly increasing difficulty of dealing with the wants and vices of the lowest classes. The children, if forced into the Board Schools, might get a smattering of knowledge in more subjects of what is commonly called education; but they would lose the training that comes of contact with friendly and unpaid teachers, whose care for them stretches far beyond the school walls, and follows them into their miserable and degraded dwellings.

"For the sake, then, of the wretched, ragged, and hungry child, who is the coveted pupil of the Ragged Schools, and the unfit occupant of the Board School benches, where he will do as much harm as he himself will get good; for the sake of the only President the Ragged School Union has ever had, the Earl of Shaftesbury, than whom the children of the poor never had a truer friend, who has given to them unnumbered hours—unnumbered save by God—we appeal to old friends, and to new ones we hope, not to neglect the Ragged Schools with the idea that the Board Schools have superseded them, and set them aside for ever.

"And for the sake of our Lord and Master, who identified Himself and His Kingdom with the cause of children, who never spoke of 'these little ones' but with infinite tenderness, we plead for help to take up the lowest from their cradle in the gutter, from their deep wretchedness and poverty, and to place them where Christ has given all children a right to be, at His feet and in His arms. "HESBA STRETTON."

After perusing the appeal, the following verses were written by a friend, and printed privately with a kindly desire to help our funds:—

APPEAL FROM THE PEER OF THE POOR.

A PEER whose days, though past "life's measured span,"
Reveal those godly attributes in man,—
When kindled, will sustain a burning power,
Undimmed and dimless to the final hour:
This peerless Noble of our mother earth,
With eighty summers from the date of birth,
Reflecting Ashley's labours of the past,
That freed the young from the oppressor's grasp,
Would still with parent-love and childlike "prayer,"
Commend poor little outcasts to our care.

Let Christian brothers say and, saying, feel
How good and godly is this Peer's appeal:

He tells the world what all the world should know,—
That men, at best, are pilgrims here below:
He points to age and Nature's grim report,
To prove the longest life on earth is short:
Onward with Time we all are bound to go,
Some without friends, but few without a foe;
Yet every step would elevate mankind
Will leave the impress of its work behind.

Although Life's currents variously divide,
All ebb, at length, into that vortex wide,
Where vanquished powers,—so prone on earth to roam,—
Are each committed to the silent tomb.
Oh! may those zealous teachers of the day,
Who aim at higher things than praise or pay,
Take helpless little children by the hand,
And by tuition, make them understand,
Although they are poor and ragged and forlorn,
God's *dearest* CHILD was in a stable born!

FRANK FOSTER.

NICHOL STREET RAGGED SCHOOLS AND MISSION.

As a frontispiece of our *Quarterly Record* we give a view of the buildings, recently enlarged, which were opened on Wednesday, October 27th, by a meeting in the Mission Room. Lord Shaftesbury hoped to be present, but the inclemency of the weather prevented him; and doubtless the same cause similarly affected a number of friends who live at a distance; but, in spite of this, a goodly number gathered to congratulate the workers on the advance the Mission had lately made. We think a short sketch of the history and present position of the work may be agreeable to many of our readers, and afford a good answer to the inquiry, "What have Ragged Schools now to do?"

Just forty years ago a gentleman, a silk manufacturer, a descendant of the Huguenots, felt that a great field of Christian labour was open before him amongst the weavers he employed. He began a Bible Class, and soon found that the work grew beyond his individual power. By the help of a few friends, in the year 1843, a small house in Nichol Street was taken, the internal walls thrown down, and a regular School and Mission on a small scale started. Of the condition of the neighbourhood then few even of those who know it now have any idea. An old report before us says:—"This spot is a stagnant corner of the world, the inhabitants all poor together, each room in

each house occupied by a distinct family." In many rooms, indeed, more than one family were crowded together. "Its only drainage was down the gutters by the sides of the pavement, accumulating in places in nauseous pools; and the scenes on the Sabbath were so gross as to defy description, the principal actors being abandoned women, who, jumping over ropes stretched across the streets, gathered crowds of onlookers, outvying each other in the obscenity of their actions and remarks."

Now, although we do not wish to imply that all is right (the Sunday morning bird market in Club Row is still a disgrace to London), there can be no question of the enormous improvement apparent on the surface. One may walk the streets and see little to offend, although a closer examination will find much misery and vice all around. Nor do we say that the entire change has been caused by the work of this Mission; but we do say that by drawing attention to the district, and by educating the people to wish for better things, many of the grosser evils have been abated, and the whole neighbourhood has been enormously altered for the better.

Success attended the Mission from the first. Strongly supported by teachers from Islington, it increased rapidly. Room after room and house after house were added, until in a very few years the two small rooms at the first became seventeen. At this time (1860) a crisis came, the old buildings were becoming dangerous, and the committee could not obtain a lease that would enable them to rebuild. After much anxious thought and inquiry they obtained a freehold site in the next street, and between the years 1862 and 1866 erected a Mission Room holding 300 adults, and school premises for boys, girls, and infants, with class rooms that would and have often accommodated over 1,000 children at one time. From 1866 to 1870 the work went on. Free Day Schools, Week Evening Schools, Sunday Schools, morning, afternoon, and evening, Mission Preaching, Mothers' Meetings, Penny Banks, Band of Hope, and all the usual adjuncts of a large London Mission.

In 1870 the London School Board was formed, and the Committee, who had long regretted that the means at their disposal did not allow them to make as efficient as they desired the Day School department of their work, determined to hand this over to the London School Board. They allowed the Board the use of these buildings rent free, simply asking that they should maintain the structure, and allow the full use of the buildings at all times except during Day School hours. The Day School was immediately properly staffed, and all necessary appliances supplied. This went on for seven or eight years, but, although there was the best feeling on both sides, the difficulty

of co-operation between the School Board and the voluntary work was considerable, and the committee were not sorry when the School Board determined to erect buildings for themselves in immediate proximity, even though it entailed a considerable burden upon themselves. The old buildings were handed back to the committee on agreed terms, and they have now been repaired, enlarged, partly rebuilt, and largely refurnished.

The Treasurer's statement showed that although the old and well-tried friends of the schools had nobly responded to the committee's appeal, there yet remained about £400 to be raised before the buildings were again out of debt. We shall be glad to hear that this incubus on the work of our friends is promptly removed.

In these large, almost the largest buildings of the kind in the metropolis, the general work of the Mission is carried on with great enthusiasm and success. The following details will give some idea of the amount of it:—

Mission work to adults, preaching, Sunday morning and evening; Prayer Meetings, Monday and Thursday; Singing Classes, Tuesday and Friday; Young Men and Young Women's Classes, Sunday afternoon; Young Men's Improvement Society, Monday evening; City Missionary's Meeting for non-attendants on Sunday, Wednesday evening.

Schools, Sunday morning, afternoon, and evening. Week nights, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Reading Rooms and Amusement Rooms, Singing Class, Band of Hope, Penny Bank, Library, and Sewing Classes.

On Sunday evenings there are often 1,000 children in the schools, and the whole operations of the Mission and Schools are carried on by two missionaries, one in connection with the London City Mission, and by about 130 voluntary teachers.

Of the value of the work it is impossible to speak too highly. Adjoining one of the large London Board Schools, in convenient and well-arranged premises, it is indeed a bright light in a dark spot. May it shine more and more brightly!

The Ragged School Union has promised £100 when the remainder is raised. Contributions will be thankfully received by Mr. John Kirk, secretary, at the office, Exeter Hall, and Henry Spicer, Esq., 19, New Bridge Street, E.C.

CONFERENCE ON YOUTHS' INSTITUTES.

A CONFERENCE of Ragged School teachers and other friends connected with this noble work was held on Wednesday evening, October 6, at the King Edward Ragged Schools, Mile End New Town, for the purpose of considering the subject of establishing Youths' Institutes, Recreation Classes, &c., for lads, and also for elder girls.

Robert R. Glover, Esq., J.P., presided, and was supported by Messrs. R. J. Curtis and John Kirk, the Secretaries of the Ragged School Union; Professor Leone Levi, LL.D.; Mr. Charles Montague, the Superintendent of King Edward Schools; the Rev. A. L. Hunt, Incumbent of Christ Church, Commercial Road; Mr. George Holland, of the George Yard Schools; Mr. Arthur Jepson, of the Portman Institute; Mr. Bewes, of the Ragged Institute at Notting Hill; Mr. Adeney, of the Turk's Row Institute; Mr. Henry Hill, Jun., of the Working Lads' Institute, Whitechapel; the Revs. W. Tyler, Thomas, and C. P. Sherman; together with a large number of representatives from other schools situated in the eastern and northern districts of the metropolis.

The company sat down to a substantial tea at six o'clock, after which they adjourned to the large schoolroom, where the proceedings commenced by the singing of a hymn, and a prayer by the Rev. William Tyler.

Mr. JOHN KIRK read letters of apology from Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. James Lawrie, the Master of the Temple, Mr. George Sturge, and other gentlemen who were unavoidably absent, all of whom expressed a favourable feeling towards the movement, and hoped that some practical ideas would be promulgated.

Mr. GLOVER, who was cordially received, stated that it was with much pleasure that he accepted the invitation to be present at the meeting, as it gave him an opportunity of seeing his old friend Professor Levi, under whose leadership, five-and-twenty years ago, he had commenced work in Ragged Schools. They had met here to-night for serious business, and he trusted that much good would ensue. Whatever schemes and plans were devised for the benefit of the lower stratum of society, the Ragged School Union would give such scheme their most careful consideration. The idea of establishing these Institutes was certainly a very good one, but he did not here intend to offer any further remarks, but would introduce to the notice of the meeting Professor Levi, who had had great experience in these matters.

Professor LEVI, who was greeted with loud applause, said: I have always admired the great self-sacrifice, the devotion, and earnest efforts of our Sunday-school teachers; and it is a reason for intense thankfulness that, in the midst of so much temptation to rest on the only day which they in a manner can call their own, they have the courage and heart to say, "No, I will not indulge in idleness on the Sabbath Day, because that day is not mine, it is God's!" Another reason for my admiration of the Sunday-school teachers is their patience and perseverance in well-doing, even in

the midst of great discouragements. True they carry with them the precious seed of God's Word, and they know that it will fructify even at a late season; but the ground, especially in the Ragged Schools, is so very unpropitious. Our teachers seem to me to be like the farmers in the West of Ireland, who sow their crops on very poor land with but slender hopes of success, yet they work hard and patiently, go through all the labour required to give the seed a fair chance, praying to God the whole while that He may give the increase. It is not for me to measure the amount of good that the Sunday and Ragged School systems have conferred on England —ay, upon the whole world. We may, indeed, value the fruit of the farmer's labour in so many palpable quarters of grain; but who can measure the value of spiritual good accomplished by this means? Who can tell the result of so many renewed lives, and preserved characters, and souls saved? The spiritual seed which produced such men as Robert Raikes, has it not been the direct agent in the creation of five hundred thousand Sabbath-school teachers, and over five millions of Sabbath scholars? The vast amount of good cannot be calculated. What we regret is that the Sunday School is necessarily limited to children, for say what we will, when a boy has passed his fourteenth year he begins to think himself beyond the range and control of the Sabbath School, and fancies himself to be a man. True, even in the Elementary Schools, children leave when they are fourteen years of age, but then they go to work, and they begin there the most important part of their education—the technical. Not so, however, with regard to moral and religious education, for just at the time when the boy begins to form his habits of life, when he begins to think for himself, and when he is subject to influences of a perilous character, he is often left, so to speak, without any natural assistance. The Sunday-school teacher's voice is no longer heard, he forms new associations, he forgets his previous lessons, and ten to one he is assailed by temptation and drifts into sin. Further on, indeed, when he gets a little older, the Church Missionary's influence, and some Young Men's Association may perchance get hold of him, but this is not always certain. In truth, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen there appears to be a gap, which it would be most important to bridge; and for this purpose I think the Youths' Institute seems to be exceedingly well adapted. But a Youths' Institute to be successful must provide the lads with the branches of instruction which he requires, and with a certain amount of recreation which they like and will prize. A lad would be offended if he were dealt with as a child, and disgusted if he were treated as an old man. Observe, there is a vast difference between Sunday Schools and Youths' Institutes. Whilst the Sunday School is intended exclusively for Biblical instruction, the Youths' Institute must include some branches of general knowledge. And inasmuch as the lads are expected to come there after the work of the day is over, you must not expect them to change suddenly from hard work to hard studies. What should be taught, and what should be given

in the way of attractive recreation at these Institutes, is therefore a matter of much moment. In the first place, they should be asylums after the day's work is done, where better influences than the world supplies are at work; let there be an air of cheerfulness about the place which in itself would be inviting. Ornament the rooms with some works of art, have on the tables several albums and other instructive and recreative books just to look at. Some of the principal newspapers should also be kept, together with magazines and periodicals. Whatever else you teach, have a good Elocution Class, for reading and speaking well are, in my opinion, the first channel to knowledge and improvement. A Lending Library would also be of great value. And give an opportunity for saving part of the wages by a Savings Bank, or other means in full operation. By no means descend in tone and character. Elevate your lads, let them always look higher towards all that is noble and refined, and you will produce a lasting good. The work should be undertaken in a liberal spirit. Remember that the eyes of the lads are upon you, and that they are no longer children. I would wish that such Institutes were formed throughout the whole metropolis, and that there should be such a bond of union between them that when a lad leaves one district he may be freely received into another Institute. The lad would thus carry with him a good character wherever he went, and that would of itself be a pledge for his preservation. The institute should not be quite free to lads actually at work. If able to pay something, they should be made to pay, but the charge should not be much; and therefore I fear that they cannot be self-supporting. I would therefore advise you to utilise as much as possible the existing schoolrooms; adapt what you have if you cannot afford to have special buildings for the purpose. I think that the Institute organised by Mr. Henry Hill in the Whitechapel Road is a very fair specimen of what is wanted; and we owe to him a very great debt of gratitude for the labour and zeal with which he has carried it through. Whatever be the issue of this Conference, I am sure that the object which has united us together this evening is an excellent one, and I commend it most heartily to your sympathies. Above all, I commend it to the blessing of God, without whose aid nothing lasting can be accomplished.

The learned gentleman sat down amidst the repeated plaudits of his audience.

Mr. ARTHUR JEPSON remarked that these Institutes might be divided into three classes: the first for young men, which are self-supporting; the second for working lads who paid a few pence per week; and, lastly, those established for the gutter boys. It is this latter class that were wanted most, as the poor children were numerous, and were those that the Union wanted to get at. They belonged to the very dregs of society, they had never heard of God, and were surrounded by everything that was bad. Sometimes he had found some good specimens who had the will to rise; and at all events something could always be done with the basest natures. He thought that the best plan would be to get the boy to

come in first of all for amusement only, then if properly worked to persuade him to attend some of the classes, until he was at length thoroughly tamed, and could be properly moulded. At all places short Gospel addresses should be given, and encouragement should be given to the lads to confide their troubles and temptations to the teacher. As to the cost, he thought that if the Mission Halls could be lent for this purpose on the evenings when they were not used, the expense would be trifling. Such arrangement would be beneficial to both societies, as the boy would naturally come to the services if he found that he could also amuse himself on other occasions. Care should be taken with regard to bad language, which in some districts where he visited was positively awful; therefore, no profane expressions should be allowed, but should be checked immediately. It was also desirable to understand that the boys must be led and not driven, and firm kindness was the principal requisite in a teacher. Banks might be established so as to inculcate habits of thrift, and other schemes might be devised for the purpose of making the lads to take an interest in the Institute. He had adopted a plan to keep the boys in order by having a ticket, which was punched with a large hole whenever the lad misbehaved himself, and he found that even that simple means was beneficial.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced Mr. Charles Montague, who he considered knew more about these Institutes than most persons, as he had himself been a scholar, and had risen through the various grades to the top of the mission. (Applause.)

Mr. MONTAGUE stated that King Edward Street School was one of the oldest of the Ragged Schools in London, and he had been connected with it as scholar, teacher, and superintendent for thirty-three years. On Sundays, they had over four hundred scholars, of whom perhaps a hundred and thirty were over fifteen years of age. With regard to these latter, he must say that they had taken them when young children, had encouraged and assisted them so that they still remained with them. The great question, however, was what is to be done for the girls and lads on week nights. Their homes were not comfortable, there was no cheerful fire, no books, and no recreation at all for them, and the consequence was they yielded to the attractions of the penny gaffs and low music-halls, and the seeds of vice were sown. The girls who attended the school were formed into an Industrial Class; they made their own clothing, and were assisted in buying the material. Twenty years ago they had founded a Penny Bank, and last year the deposits were between £80 and £90. Twelve years since they established a kind of Exhibition to encourage the boys to occupy their leisure hours profitably, and it had proved most successful, the one recently held attracting a very large number of visitors. They had separate reading-rooms for the boys and girls, which were furnished with interesting publications. They had now thirty-four teachers, but could do better with a dozen more. To keep the boys together during the summer evenings, they had established a Drum and Fife Band, and as, of course, they did not wish

to make merely musicians of all the boys in the district, no lad could belong to the band unless he was a member of the Bible Class. For all these benefits and privileges there was no charge whatever. They had established a Lending Library for parents, and he found this answered very well. Men in positions of responsibility, who in time gone by had been boys in his class, have admitted to him that they owed much of their happiness and prosperity to the books he had lent them when attending the schools.

Mr. HENRY HILL, Jun., agreed with Professor Levi that it was boys over fourteen years of age who wanted the most looking after. He considered that the leading idea of an Institute should be a *Shelter;* the lads had now so much time to themselves, and their homes were such uncongenial places, that it was necessary for them to have somewhere to go to prevent them from being driven into low places, and becoming vicious. At his Institute he had Reading-rooms and Library, and they had some kind of entertainment every week. He had also a Penny Bank, and last year the deposits were over £50. He was of opinion that the boys should pay a trifle, as it would make them value it more, and consider it a privilege to attend. He had occasionally been compelled to expel some of the boys for misconduct, but he found that they always begged very hard to be allowed to come back. They had also classes for different subjects, for which the lads had to pay sixpence a month extra. They had besides a band, and in the summer cricket and swimming. One boy in the Swimming Class had recently saved two lives, although he was not yet fifteen. He considered a model Institute adapted for the purpose should have class-rooms, lecture-room, baths, gymnasium, &c., but where this could not be obtained the loan of a schoolroom might be had for the purpose of starting an Institute. It might commence with one evening a week, and then two, and so on; this plan had been adopted in other places, where it had answered very well.

The Rev. WILLIAM TYLER suggested that the Ragged School Union should train teachers for future use, as he was sure that such a proceeding would be vastly beneficial. The establishment of these Institutes would appear to him to be quite within the sphere of the Union's work. He would urge that properly qualified teachers should be secured by payment for their services. He thought the Union should lay down some plan for establishing half a dozen Institutes in various parts of London, and he would especially recommend that drawing should be taught.

Mr. R. J. CURTIS said that the object of the Ragged School Union in taking up this question was to show their readiness to adopt *any* idea or operation that would assist the main point—viz., that of raising intellectually, morally, and spiritually the juvenile portion of this metropolis, and not with any notion that their chief work had been superseded. A previous speaker had defined the Institute as a shelter, and, as such, the Union would consider how far they could help to establish them. The work of the Union, great as it has been, would have been far greater if more persons had felt an interest in humanity.

Sunday-night work amongst elder boys and girls in some so-called religious quarters was found to be impossible, because the necessary agency was not to be had. Churches seem not to be lighthouses, but dark lanterns. Institutes would be of good service in getting boys to come in during the week, which would pave the way for their meeting on Sundays. And here let me utter a caution—it is no use having a fine room unless you get some one to take an interest in the work to be done—to be, as it were, the soul of the place. He cited the case of the Youths' Institute at Islington under the late Mr. Tabrum, in order to show the magnetic influence of a loving man in drawing hundreds about him. He believed in amusement; "all work and no play made Jack a dull boy;" therefore, give them plenty of innocent recreation, and that will be found a pleasing auxiliary in putting down vice. Men and women who have an interest in humanity, there is a ringing cry, myriad-tongued, from the boys and girls of the London streets, saying, "Come hither and help us!"

Mr. GEORGE HOLLAND said when he first established industrial classes, after the pattern of the Exeter Buildings Ragged School in Sloane Street, Chelsea, he found a volunteer to assist him, and their classes for carpenter's work and cabinet-making, fretwork, &c., were progressing favourably. The boys were fond of doing something useful. He usually called upon those lads who were at work to teach what they knew, and so formed mutual industrial classes. Perhaps the Turners' Company would allow some person to come down and instruct the boys—at all events he meant to have a try for it. They had forty-four Sunday School classes, and the boys had made all the boxes to keep the books in. He had lately obtained a small printing-press, which he found very useful for printing circulars, notices, &c. But what they wanted was more helpers; they had 150 girls and 140 boys, but they could have plenty more if they had assistance. He thought that the poor ragged little folks ought to be looked after of an evening, and they were to be got at by affording them innocent amusement.

Mr. DAWKINS had been connected with the Ogle Mews Ragged School for about four years. He started the Institute by giving out a few notices inviting the children to come in, and then addressing them on the subject of the Gospel. He only used to get about twenty at first, but he was glay to say that they now numbered nearly 150. He endeavoured as much as possible to combine amusement with instruction.

Mr. BEWES said he had a great desire to emulate the great things he had heard about that evening; he had only started last August, but he hoped to have large results. He tried to make the Institute attractive, and he found the bagatelle-board to be a perfect magnet. Having once netted his fish he did not let them go without giving them an address in homely language and a short prayer.

Mr. RYALL, from Bermondsey, gave a short account of his experience in a humorous speech, the point of which was—that a human, loving heart, exhibiting a spirit of self-sacrifice, could not fail eventually of touching even the most abandoned. He cited some instances to show it.

Professor LEVI then proposed: "That this Conference of Ragged School workers and others, being impressed with the advantage of Youths' Institutes as a means for the preservation of young people from the ages of fourteen to twenty from the temptations to which they are subjected, hereby resolve to co-operate with the Committee of the Ragged School Union in their endeavours to promote the establishment of such Institutes throughout the metropolis."

The Rev. Mr. HUNT seconded the resolution, which was put to the meeting, and carried unanimously.

Mr. CURTIS proposed, and Mr. KIRK seconded, a vote of thanks to the Chairman and Professor Levi, which having been replied to, the meeting closed with the benediction.

ON Wednesday, October 20th, a second Conference of Ragged School workers was held in the Castle Street Ragged School, Endell Street, Long Acre. Tea was provided at six o'clock, at which upwards of 200 friends sat down, representing schools in all parts of the metropolis.

The subject for special consideration, "What are the best means for attracting and retaining the rough elder lads and girls on Sunday and other evenings?" drew together an earnest and enthusiastic audience.

At the commencement of the meeting Mr. John Kirk read a telegram from Lord Shaftesbury, stating that he was unable to come from Wimborne to preside, and in his absence Mr. J. Hicks Buckingham, a member of the Committee, took the chair.

The hymn, "Come, let us join our cheerful songs," having been sung, Mr. Forbes offered prayer.

The CHAIRMAN, in his opening remarks, stated his conviction that Week Night Ragged Schools were needed now as much as ever. In fact, the needs of the lower orders in the matter of religious training were now greater than ever, and unless this want was met he scarcely dared to consider what would become of the thousands of young men and women that were at the present time wandering about the streets of all our large towns. He thanked those present for the devoted energy they had evinced in the past, and begged them to dismiss the thought that they were not wanted. Education during the last few years had made great progress, but the poorest element of society still needed their loving care.

MRS. CHARLESWORTH then gave an address, prefacing it with some remarks that her experience was confined to Limehouse, but as that was a large London parish, and situate in one of the poorest districts of the metropolis, she thought it would form a guide as to the needs of the class whose interests they were desirous of advancing, and also serve to show some of the ways in which success might be attained. At the time of the formation of the London School Board they had six voluntary schools, of which, since then, five had closed their doors. In Limehouse there were 600 ragged children who were receiving no education. Their very poverty prevented them attending the Board Schools. The ragged Arabs form a class by them-

selves, and will not mix in the schools. It might be asked, why had they closed five of their schools? To this she had but one reply, lack of funds to carry on the work.

In the Ragged Schools they did not aim high in their standard of education, but the rather preferred giving the knowledge of what would be useful besides the three R's; they taught the boys some industrial pursuit, such as to mend and make shoes, and the girls the use of their needle, and she knew of many bright instances where such training had been of vast service in after life.

As regards Sunday and week-night work, the elements of success in Limehouse were, (1) That we come with the love of Christ in our own hearts, and strive to bring the scholars to Christ.

(2) The regularity of the teachers, and not moving the scholars from one class to a higher; in the Ragged School the children often chose their own teacher, and to take them away would be to break the link from which we expect much. The scholars get to know and love their teachers, and their influence is greater in consequence.

(3) By always recognising their scholars. Only recently, wishing to stop a tram car, two or three boys ran after it and stopped it, saying, "Hi! Stop! here's Mrs. Charlesworth coming!" Who is there that has not often had the salutation from little ones as they pass through the crowded thoroughfare, "Hallo, teacher!"

Mrs. Charlesworth then gave some account in detail of her week-night teaching for girls. At first the language was rough, and often profane, but this lessened, and at last entirely ceased; much good work was done, and many a true lesson was implanted through the reading of suitable books. Of course they were not without their crosses, for when the girls had made and paid for their garments sometimes their mothers pawned them to raise money for the necessaries of life, or to spend in drink.

Then as to factory meetings. It is cheering to see many of the workers in these large places of business taking an interest in the Word of God. She always made her time for holding them subservient to the girls' convenience. It was a source of much pleasure to find that the tea half-hour was proposed to be given up for prayer, and that an Evening Bible Class was well sustained. These and many other indications of earnest desires after better things were some alone of the pleasures resulting from the work. If we do our part, we shall find that the Lord will help.

MR. MENZIES, superintendent of Stephen-the-Yeoman Schools, then read the following paper:—

WHAT ARE THE BEST MEANS FOR ATTRACTING AND RETAINING THE ROUGH ELDER LADS AND GIRLS ON SUNDAY AND OTHER EVENINGS?

The question we have met to discuss to-night is not a new one. It is but a part of that great problem which earnest men and women have been trying to solve ever since loving hearts have grieved over sin and suffering. For ages the complete solution has been eagerly sought, and here in the centre of the world's greatest city we confess again that it has not yet been found.

Eighteen centuries and a half have passed since the Master, His work on earth finished, said to His disciples, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The record which tells how this exhortation has been obeyed, while it speaks of many noble and Christ-like deeds, is filled with stories of wasted efforts and disappointed hopes, of shameful backslidings and heart-breaking failures. And to-day, instead of in a world won for Christ, the Christian looks abroad on nations lying in sin and wickedness, and on millions even within sound of church bells, living and dying as though there were no Almighty Father, no Saviour who died for sinners, no world to come, and no judgment beyond the grave. Such a thought ought surely to incite us who in any way are endeavouring to obey the Master's command to teach the nations to greater exertions, and to more humble dependence on Him who alone can prosper our work.

Premising this, I come more particularly to the question before us to-night. We are here as teachers in Ragged Schools to ask of each other how best we may attract from the streets to our rooms, and there bring under religious teaching, those rough elder lads and girls with whose existence in large numbers in London we are all painfully familiar. Further, how most successfully we may retain those of our scholars who are advancing to manhood and womanhood.

Firstly, then, how best shall we retain our elder lads and girls on Sunday evenings? It is a fact known to all of us that there comes a period in the life of boys and girls when they begin to think themselves too old to attend school. Imagining themselves already men and women, they long to put away childish things, and one of the childish things they fret most against is the habit of sitting in a class in the neighbourhood of their juniors. Hence it is that we lose so many of our scholars when they reach sixteen or eighteen. Of course if the teachers of these elder lads and girls is a lady or gentleman of a strong individuality, who has won the love of his or her scholars, he or she will find no difficulty in retaining them. Such a teacher is a friend and companion to each member of the class, and a friend who will not be voluntarily lost. Even in such case, however, I do not consider it advisable that young men and women should be retained in the school after they have reached maturity. No school is complete which is not part of

A MISSION

(it is not necessary that the mission should be an extreme one), and scholars should pass by natural gradations from the class in the school to the Bible Class or Mission Service, or other organisations provided for young men and women. And always the school ought to be regarded in the light of a feeder for the Church. I know that the fact of our Ragged Schools being strictly non-sectarian offers a difficulty here. Personally I see no objection to the Church teacher taking his scholars with him to church, and transferring them to the care of the

minister, the dissenter in like manner taking his with him to chapel. In any case the best way to retain scholars is to induce them to join themselves to some section of the visible Church.

Theoretically this is the most satisfactory answer to this part of our question, and it ought to be the aim of every Ragged School teacher to bring his scholars into fellowship with the members of Christ's Church on earth. Were such a distinct goal steadily pursued by us all, I am sure the direct results of our teaching would be infinitely greater than they are now. Even where young men and women are not brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, much would be gained by their being induced to become regular frequenters of some place of public worship. It is the vagueness of our aim which weakens our efforts so often. With a steady purpose and something to work towards, the labours of Ragged School teachers could not but become much more productive than they now are.

Still it remains a fact—to the shame of professing Christians be it said—that elder lads and girls who remain "rough" decline to enter a church or chapel. They dislike with a hearty dislike the beadle and the chapel-keeper, and these officials return the compliment with unlovely vigour; they dislike the whole system of Sunday clothes and pews, and in most cases the wearers of Sunday clothes, and the respectable occupants of respectable pews (how detestable a word "respectable" sometimes is!) would decline to accept them as fellow-worshippers. Then the restless habits of many of them (and what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh) unfit them for long prayers, tedious discourses, and indifferent singing, which too often make up our public religious services.

It comes back to this, then, that we must find on Sunday evenings something other than the class in the school or the service in church or chapel if we are to retain our scholars after they have grown to be young men and women.

At the least two class-rooms attached to each school are absolutely necessary for the due carrying out of any successful effort in this direction. In one the young men ought to be under the charge of a teacher, not necessarily profoundly learned—though in these days a Ragged School teacher cannot be too well informed—but certainly patient, sympathetic, brotherly or fatherly—it does not matter which, either will do—and deeply imbued with the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ; with a lady of a similar disposition in the class-room set apart for young women, the effort to interest the youths of both sexes will not prove difficult.

And here, incidentally, I would remark that the gospel to be taught to the rough youths of London ought essentially to be the gospel of love. In the main the young men and women whom one sees about the streets, seemingly going to the devil post-haste, do not care two pins for the terrors of the future, paint you them no matter how vividly. Their daily language has familiarised them with these terrors till, grown contemptuous, they utterly despise them. It is not so

with the story of Christ's love; it comes to them, if faithfully presented, as something strange and wonderful, beautiful by contrast with all that they have experienced in life.

"Be gentle," Ragged School teacher. "It is better far
To rule by love than fear.
Be gentle! Let not harsh words mar
The good we may do here."

Compare Christ's manner towards Mary Magdalene with the reception He gave the self-satisfied Pharisees, and you will have a good lesson in Ragged School teaching. Inasmuch as one of the great wants of these young men and women is a pure and ennobling home-life, the school or the mission-room ought as much as possible to be made a picture of an ideal home. If the evening is to be passed in the class-rooms—and I think it a mistake to dismiss such youths at an early hour—by all means, after the lesson encourage healthy conversation. Do not be afraid to have books about with pleasant pictures in them, and don't forget that to sing and to listen to sweet music is to civilise oneself in no small degree. Show by every possible means that the Gospel of Jesus is lovely, and any Sunday evening when the teacher feels impelled to pull a long face and look desperately gloomy, by all means let him stop at home or go to church or chapel.

The second part of the subject is, in reality, the first. How shall we attract, gather in the multitude of youths of both sexes whom either we have never had under instruction, or who, having once been scholars, are now the "lapsed masses" of our institution?

Personally, I do not like any course of procedure which even occasionally brings professing Christians in this country in opposition to the law. The same ends may be reached, I am convinced, by gentler means. Supposing that a new effort is to be made in a school or mission to get hold of the youths of a neighbourhood who hang about the streets on Sunday evenings, no better way that I know of can be adopted than for a few of the *male* teachers to go out into the thoroughfares and lanes and try what personal persuasion will do towards inducing these heedless ones to come in. Of course, it is scarcely to be expected that any large number will be gathered in all at once. "But if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again."

"He that good thinketh good may do,
And God will help him thereunto."

Then, as elephants which have been caught and tamed are used in the East to capture their savage kindred, so the youths already in the school may be encouraged to bring in their acquaintances and neighbours. The end is not to be gained in a day, but here also perseverance will gain its reward.

And having induced a number of rough grown-up lads and girls to enter a school or mission-room on a Sunday evening, what then? In the first place, pray earnestly to God for wisdom, for the task to retain these restless creatures is no light one. I consider that to retain the grown-up scholar who has been years in the school, the class-room made as much like a model home as possible is "the thing." But with these new comers it is different. On

them a bright, and lively, and lovely service will produce most good.

There used to be a story in one of the school books of our younger days which told us of the various gates whereby we might attain knowledge. There were Ear Gate, and Eye Gate, and Nose Gate, and so on. The number of gates possessed by many of the roughs of London, as far as the attainment of spiritual knowledge is concerned, is limited. The gates of ear and eye, however, still remain available. Let these be attacked vigorously; the hinges may be rusty, but they will swing ultimately. I think in some cases a magic-lantern may be used to advantage. Our Saviour dealt largely in parables, and the assistance of a pictorial representation of any Bible story or other history which will point the great moral we desire to inculcate will be found very useful. A speaker with power to rivet the attention of a restless audience of rough London youths is not to be met every day. To such an one the difficulty of attracting and retaining rough elder lads and girls does not exist. To others less gifted pictorial help can scarcely fail to prove useful. In any case the address or addresses ought to be short. The prayers ought also to be brief; and above all, before any one prays in such a service as we are now referring to, let him be filled with the knowledge of the presence of God. Then there ought to be plenty of singing—neither in the drawling nor the jig style, but cheerful and devout; the two qualities are not necessarily antagonistic. Solo-singing, accompanied or unaccompanied, will also add effectively to the attractiveness of a service. If the audience is very poor, and the time is winter, and if the funds will permit it, a cup of coffee before the meeting is dissolved is in every sense a good thing. Were it only for the opportunity it gives for a few minutes' pleasant conversation, such a wind-up to a service is much to be desired.

After all, an end greatly to be laboured for is that a kind feeling of friendship should grow up between those who conduct such gatherings and those for whose benefit they are got up. Only when such friendship is a reality is the stability of these meetings secured. One of the great secrets of the non-success of the Church is the lack of practical sympathy which its members display towards the masses, and no effort we may make to attract to to our services those now careless and scornful will deserve to succeed which is not permeated by the spirit of brotherly love. The words of our Father ought ever to be on our lips, the consciousness of the truth which the words represent in our heart, and the fact that we look on these rough youths as brothers and sisters should be apparent in all our actions. A service alone will not effectively convey this conviction. I suggest, where a serious effort to get at the elder lads and girls is to be made, that the time from six to seven o'clock on Sunday evenings should be devoted to a bright, pictorial, musical, earnest, and prayerful service, and from seven to eight or nine o'clock to friendly intercourse.

Having dealt at so great a length with the question as it relates to Sunday evenings, I must content myself with merely indicating such

helps as occur to me for other evenings. While ever bearing in mind that Ragged Schools exist for religious purposes, and that when they cease to bring sinners into the kingdom they will have no longer a *raison d'être*, I think that as far as practicable they should be turned into clubs from Monday to Saturday. With the Night School there ought to be Sewing and Knitting Classes for young women, and opportunity for innocent amusements; and newspapers and other reading for young men. A very valuable suggestion recently made at a conference on this subject is that on week-evenings lessons in carpentery and other trades might be profitably given. In these days, when the necessity for technical education is so widely recognised, something in this direction might certainly be attempted in our Ragged Schools. Temperance Societies, and Drum and Fife and Brass Bands, will also be found valuable auxiliaries to our main work, and in the winter lectures and entertainments, musical and elocutionary, may always be given with excellent effect. As aiding towards that friendly feeling between those who help and those who are helped, parties to visit the museums and famous buildings and places in and round London will be found very useful. And wherever practicable for both spiritual and social purposes, teachers should make a practice of inviting to their homes, singly or in numbers, their elder scholars, whether male or female.

To carry out any scheme for the moral and spiritual advancement of these rough lads and girls supposes a considerable band of earnest Christian workers. Alas! that band is small, far too small for the needs of the case! The Church has shirked its duty towards these waifs—shamefully shirked it. Because is has done so it has brought on itself merited scorn, and has even tarnished the fame of Christianity. Were every one of God's ministers, every man and woman who confesses the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to join heart and hand in the patient, steadfast, prayerful resolution to win the world for Christ, how soon should we see a new earth. Were all the professing Christians in London to set about doing their duty by their unsaved brethren, this problem of how to attract and retain the rough elder lads and girls would not take long to solve.

The Chairman then threw the Conference open, and the

Rev. STORER CLARKE, Incumbent of Greenwich, said it appeared to him there were two classes which needed help, whose condition he might thus describe: the one was wrecked, and the other in danger. Our work was therefore to go out to rescue the wrecked, and to buoy the channel, to guard the way, so as to guide those that were endangered. Begin with a few that you can well manage, and then send them out as leaven among the mass. Deal individually, and wake up personal interest in those you meet from time to time, not thinking so much of the numbers that attend as of those you win. He also considered temperance a mighty power in the work.

Mr. FORBES said that it had been well remarked that love was the mighty power in this work. He was reminded of the story of the boy who when asked why he passed

several schools on his way to the one he attended, answered, "They do so love a feller there." Reference had been made to the use of magic-lantern entertainments in attracting. He had been much exercised upon that question, and he should be glad if those present would give him their opinion as to the advisability of such gatherings on the Sunday evening—of course with proper care as to selection of subjects.

Mr. DAVIES suggested that there could be no more harm in the exhibition of Scripture scenes by the magic-lantern than in the looking at the pictures in an illustrated Bible.

Mr. BEVAN, Superintendent of Portland Town Mission School, St. John's Wood, then described the plan of a Sunday School house they were proposing to carry out in their neighbourhood, to be worked by a lay committee representative of the surrounding churches.

Mr. W. J. ORSMAN, of the Golden Lane Mission, in some forceful words described the efforts he had made to reach the masses, and advocated the use of magic-lantern entertainments, which he had found most valuable adjuncts. In his mission work he had always tried to impart Scripture truths through the illustrations presented. Some of the subjects he had taken were: "The Quickest Thing in the World," from which he had drawn many lessons upon the necessity and the value of prayer; "The Strongest Thing in the World," by which he had been enabled to illustrate the omnipotence of faith. Scenes showincidents in the lives of illustrious Scripture saints had attracted attention and left an impress on the minds and hearts of his hearers that time had never effaced. Only recently he was looking over the list of those who were now regularly connected with him in his work, and he could trace 121 who had joined him when merely boys and girls. He thought great care was needed in the selection of the men who engaged in the work indicated. In proper hands such entertainments were not only attractive in their power but impressive in their influence.

Mr. BEWES, working at Notting Hill Gate, spoke on recreation classes for poor and ragged boys, and advocated the having of games, such as draughts, bagatelle, and dominoes. His great object was to draw such boys from the street—to allure them with games, to catch them with guile—and then with a few loving and sympathetic words to aim to make them human and Christlike. He always engaged in prayer, and though at first interruptions did occur, they ceased in a short time. Never say a thing without having first considered it, but then have it observed. This will bespeak confidence. Then be familiar with those that come. Speak to them by their names, even getting hold of their nicknames if you can. They will then think the more of you, and the avenues of usefulness will be increased.

Mr. MONTAGUE, of the King Edward Ragged School, Mile End New Town, exhibited a programme of their course of entertainments for the winter, and explained the system of class work carried on in the institution with which he was connected. To inaugurate the winter

session they gave entertainments, providing each scholar with two tickets, one for themselves, and another with which he or she must bring a stranger. Unless they did so they were ineligible to attend. They also provided an entertainment for the parents, the amusement at which was almost entirely provided by the scholars.

Mr. MACAULAY, of Latimer Road, spoke of the value of a coffee-room and of cocoa concerts, and then

Mr. R. J. CURTIS, reviewing the suggestions that had been made, said that different localities demanded different agencies, but if the hearts of those who engaged in the work were inspired with the desire to be useful, love would dictate the best way. He then moved the following resolution:—

"That this meeting considers the condition of the rising youth, more especially those of the poorer class, to be such as to excite the deepest concern. The Sabbath is to most of them no day for the rising to a higher life, but one on which their lowest natures run riot, and degrading influences are paramount. In view of such consideration, this meeting heartily sympathises with the Ragged School Union in its desire to bring these young people under religious influence, and pledges itself to employ every available agency to bring about so desirable a result. This meeting further solicits the co-operation of every Christian minister and every earnest disciple of Christ with this Society in its aggressive attack on the advancing empire of darkness, and hopes to see every available building under their control occupied with Sunday and Week-night agencies for the benefit of young people most in need of divine and humanising influences."

The doxology was then sung, and the Chairman pronounced the benediction.

In Memoriam.

MISS CHARLESWORTH.

MARIA LOUISA CHARLESWORTH was born in the beautiful old Rectory of Blakenum, in Suffolk, on October 1, 1819. Her father was for many years rector of the neighbouring parish of Flowton, where in her childhood years she delighted to co-operate with her excellent parents in their cottage visitations, Bible-readings, and Sunday and week-day school supervision. With an intensely sympathetic nature, and a loving, generous disposition, she won the confidence and affection of poor and rich: the cottage, the farmhouse, the hall, alike welcomed the gentle, thoughtful girl who brought sunshine wherever she went. Thus twenty years of intimate acquaintance with cottage and farmhouse life stored her mind with those many beautiful scenes and touching incidents which her pen has so graphically portrayed in "Ministering Children," "England's Yeomen," "Oliver of the Mill," "Old Dorothy's Looking-glass," and

other of her books. Eventually her father became the rector of a London parish, St. Mildred, in the City, where Miss Charlesworth endeavoured to carry on parochial ministrations similar to those which had so engrossed her interest and energy in Suffolk; but, lacking the pure air and tranquillity of her former country life, her health soon failed under the effort. When long confined to her sick chamber, amid the din and gloom of a city residence, sorrowing to be laid aside from active work in her loved Master's service, she sought comfort and refreshment in recalling the memories of the past, and

so she was led to record, in her beautiful tales, the stories of deep interest which she had gathered in her observation and intimate knowledge of the cottages and homesteads of Suffolk.

Her books are essentially a record of her heart and life. We trace the loving tender spirit ever seeking to live for others from one book to another, as little Jane at her mother's side, drinking in the wisdom of the older life; as Mabel, the child of the farm, fearlessly riding its young horses, or kneeling beside the dying cottager; as Marian in her rectory home; as Dorothy seeking the wandering sheep even at the prison doors; as the ministering friend in "The

Cottage and its Visitor," and in many an incident woven into her touching histories, which could never rightly be called fiction, since they owe their charms more to her retentive memory than to the vivid imagination which sheds its halo of beauty over all.

Her work in her crowded city district drew forth her warmest sympathies to the London poor. She was the means of establishing three Ragged Schools in the borough of Southwark, to which her attention had been specially directed by the Earl of Shaftesbury. Two of these still exist, and have each become centres of active mission work. The one called "Stephen the Yeoman" was opened in 1863, in memory of the friend whose life is recorded in "England's Yeomen," and to this school the first proceeds of that book were devoted. Shortly after she began a Mothers' Meeting for the parents of the children. This, which ever after continued one of her deepest interests, now numbers 150 poor women, who claim her as their best and dearest friend. Upon the death of her father she and her aged mother removed to the pleasant village of Nutfield, in Surrey, occupying a cottage residence close to the church. There for sixteen years she laboured devotedly and generously for the good of those dwelling around her with all the love and zeal of her youthful days. The departure of her saintly mother in 1869 left her life more lonely, but she strove to make her home a shelter for all who needed comfort or instruction; and thus she lived, blessed and made a blessing. The last years of her life were marked by unusual trial, as friend after friend was called to the heavenly home, and when her strength failed, and the classes she so loved had to be given up, she said with a touching smile, "Let patience have her perfect work." An illness of most severe suffering was borne without a murmur. When too weak even to offer a prayer she was heard to say, "Thank God there is a heaven to praise Him in." And to her faithful nurse, who had served her for twenty-six years, she said, "Let this be your only thought, as soon as the breath is out of my body I shall be beholding the face of my Saviour." Her last words were, "Amen, Jesus; Jesus, Amen." She then sank into unconsciousness, but at noon on Saturday, October 16th, she opened her eyes, gave one tender look upon the watchers, and departed to the glory. And now that she has entered into her rest, the joy of her Lord, she has left behind her a revered name, a fragrant memory, which will long endure in the hearts of many to whom she has ministered.

At two o'clock on Thursday afternoon the remains of Miss Charlesworth were interred in Nutfield Churchyard, amidst a large number of sympathetic friends. The quaint old church was almost inconveniently crowded. The Rev. H. Brass, M.A., of St. Matthew's,

Redhill, and the Rev. Samuel Charlesworth conducted the service, the coffin of polished wood, silver-clasped, resting meanwhile in the centre aisle, shrouded with a pall and decked with flowers. The mourners were the Rev. Samuel (brother of the deceased) and Mrs. Charlesworth, Professor Edward Cowell, of Cambridge, and Mrs. Cowell, and the Rev. James Masters, vicar of Lower Beeding. On quitting the church more than a hundred sorrowing people followed the coffin, which was lowered into the grave by members of Miss Charlesworth's Bible Class. A large floral cross of white blossoms, with maidenhair fern intermixed, sent by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Barclay, were placed on the lid, which bore, engraved on a silver plate, the simple inscription :—

MARIA LOUISA CHARLESWORTH,
Born 1st October, 1819.
Died 16th October, 1880.

To those gathered about the grave, the Rev. Samuel Charlesworth, rector of Limehouse, said :—"Amongst the papers of my dear sister, written very shortly before her death—perhaps some of the last she ever penned—was this :—'Brother, my funeral should be both as simple and as impressive as possible; and if you should raise your dear voice over your sleeping sister, and speak to those gathered—not one word of her—not one! but only, like John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God." To the saint to live for Him, to the sinner to come to Him, it might be a Pentecostal day.' In conformity to this, her expressed wish, dear Christian friends, I have asked of your minister pemission to join in this service to commit these mortal remains of my dear sister to the earth; but, oh, remember that it is only the dust that we have returned to the dust, and that last Saturday her immortal spirit winged its way to the realms of glory; that she is now dwelling in the presence of her Saviour, beholding Him face to face, and clothed with that robe of righteousness whiter than the snow on which we are now looking, and which is the emblem of the righteousness of the forgiven sinner. Why is it we are sure that she has gone to that world of glory? why is it we are very sure she is now sinless, and spotless, and blessed for ever? Because she looked by faith on the Lamb of God that was slain for her; because she was washed in His precious blood. I ask you to remember the many words she has often spoken to you, and to think of her now as in her Saviour's presence, and to seek by your constant Christian life here on earth to follow in her footsteps, but only as she followed, meekly and consistently in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was a place left for her in the grave of my beloved parents, who are buried at Limpsfield. That was reserved for her, and she knew it; but her feeling

was, 'No, I will not be buried away from those dearly beloved people among whom I have ministered for sixteen years; let me rest among them, and then perhaps they will think more of what I have said to them in endeavouring to lead them to the Saviour.' Here then we place her mortal remains, and when you sometimes look upon her grave you will remember how she loved and prayed for your souls, because she wanted you to be with her and the great multitude around the throne of God. These are my parting words to you, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.'" Previous to the interment, the village children stood around the coffin, which was brought out into the garden, and, with a large number of Miss Charlesworth's friends, both rich and poor, sang the hymn, "For ever with the Lord." The whole ceremonial of the day seemed more like a thanksgiving service for the entrance into glory than the committal of dust to dust, while the brilliant sunshine and the light fall of snow over the surrounding graves enhanced the beauty and solemnity of the scene.

In a letter to the Editor respecting this saintly woman, Lord Shaftesbury says:—"The death of such a woman as the late Miss Charlesworth should not pass unnoticed by any paper treating of the welfare, temporal and eternal, of the very poorest classes of society. I speak not now of her literary abilities, nor of the beautiful works she has written for the sake of our Lord and His people. I speak of her tender care and love for the wretched outcast children of London—hundreds of whom, by the formation of Stephen the Yeoman School, have been rescued from every form of temporal and spiritual misery. What I tell I state from my own knowledge. I was her first agent in that work, and I can answer for the pure and intense delight she took in all its blessed results. It is astonishing what, by God's mercy, women can do, if they will but set their hearts and minds to the career before them."

THE LATE MR. J. CHAPMAN.

Our readers will be glad to learn that the appeal made on behalf of Mrs. Chapman and her three fatherless children has been, under God's blessing, heartily and liberally responded to. Mrs. Chapman and the friends who put forward the appeal desire to express their sincere thanks to those who have so generously rendered help, and they earnestly pray that the Great Borrower—for they that give to the poor lend to the Lord—may repay them with interest a hundredfold.

CHILDREN'S GENEROSITY.—VINCENT STREET SCHOOL.

DEAR SIR,—A little incident that occurred at this school on Monday last I thought you might like to know of. About a fortnight ago one of the little fellows in the infant class fell from one of the model balconies into the street, a distance of twenty feet, and was carried insensible to the hospital. He so far recovered as to be at school on Sunday evening, but looking very ill and weak. His mother being very poor, I proposed, if any of the children liked to bring their farthings and halfpence, they should buy their little schoolmate something to strengthen him. They subscribed one shilling and ninepence, and bought a bottle of jelly and a bunch of grapes. When you visit the school please not to mention this, as I don't want them to think they deserve praise for any such action, but I thought you would be as pleased as I am to find such a spirit of kindness amongst such poor children, from whom the gift of farthings even is an evidence of self-denial. They had the pleasure of giving it themselves to the little boy. I remain, dear Sir, yours respectfully,

H. MARCHANT, Mistress.

To the Editor of the QUARTERLY RECORD.

HOLIDAYS FOR SICK CHILDREN.

JURSTON STREET RAGGED SCHOOL.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS, secretary of the Holiday Committee, states: "Following the lead of the Vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel (who sent 170 children into the country last year), the teachers of the above school formed a committee to collect funds and send into the country the sick or delicate children of their school for a fortnight's holiday. The plan of operations was:—

"1st. To make a written or personal application to any known charitable person for a donation if residing in London, or if within fifty miles for either a donation or an offer to receive the children amongst their cottagers.

"2nd. To send into the country for a fortnight any boy or girl attending the school who was sick or really requiring a change of air.

"3rd. To see to their personal cleanliness, and have them examined by a doctor as to their freedom from any infectious disease or complaint.

"They have sent away fourteen children, at a total cost of £14 5s., including cost of collecting, &c.

"The children, with but one exception, behaved very well, and returned much improved in health, and laden with gifts of fruit, flowers, and vegetables from their cottager hosts."

As an instance of the benefit accruing from the scheme and the kindness of the cottagers we take the following:—"Two brothers, the elder very delicate and the younger subject to frequent fits (having sometimes as many as twenty a week), were sent to a Mrs. C., at Horsham, Sussex, for a couple of weeks. Whilst there the lads called Mr. and Mrs. C. uncle and aunt, and the elder received an invitation to spend a week at Christmas with them. They returned loaded with fruit, flowers, and a plum cake, the elder quite well and strong, and the younger so much freer from fits (having had only four in two weeks) that the doctor entertains hopes of a perfect cure if he can only have another month of pure country air, and that we are thankful to say his grandmother at Godalming has been able to offer him. Next year we trust, by God's blessing, to largely extend our operations.

YOUTHS' INSTITUTE, OLD PYE STREET, WESTMINSTER.

A VERY successful effort in connection with this Institute, which is under the superintendence of Mr. W. Geary, consists of a manuscript paper devoted to original charades, enigmas, &c., composed by the members, and entitled "The Youths' Institute Puzzle Sheet." The paper (one sheet of foolscap) appears weekly, with occasional breaks for want of "copy" and other causes. The present year has been very favourable to its appearing, it having had an almost continuous existence, and has now reached its 121st number. It gives an impulse to thought, invention, and composition. One of its most peculiar results has been the development of an extraordinary desire to "search the dictionary." No less than three of these useful works of reference are in constant demand. "After you with the 'dic.'" is a phrase of frequent occurrence. One copy was fairly worn out in about four months, and the readers subscribed for another. The old one is still in use, and gives ample proof of the service it has seen. Besides all this two of the members have provided themselves with "Nuttalls" of their own.

HALF A MILE FROM WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Most Englishmen look with pardonable pride upon London as a kind of centre of the world; and nowhere perhaps in the world could any spot be named so illustrious as the centre of that centre, the area which is included by a circle of half a mile radius drawn from Westminster Abbey. There beats the great heart of the political life of Great Britain. There is her ancient hall of justice. There the mainsprings of the complex machinery of her home, foreign, and colonial affairs. There, the headquarters of her army and her navy. There, the palace of the chief dignitary of her Church, and hard by, but just beyond the half-mile boundary, are four royal residences, and the mansions of many of her noblest and greatest sons. Would that this were all. Alas, there are blots on that fair scutcheon, there is a tarnish on her lustre. Here infamy jostles with honour. Squalor elbows splendour. Mean courts and vice-haunted streets hang on the fringe of the noblest thoroughfares; and thickest, where the houses are the poorest, crowd the drink-shops, fattening, as the fungus feeds, on the disease, the folly, and the sin of the people. Within this area there may be counted, besides three large breweries and one distillery, not less than 100 houses devoted to the sale of intoxicating liquors. From the nature of the district (one-third of which is occupied by parks, public buildings, and the river), it is difficult to form an accurate estimate of the resident population; but as the number does not probably exceed 20,000, it will be seen that the proportion of drink-shops to the inhabitants is excessively large. If we omit, say, eight or ten, which meet a legitimate want, and supply refreshments to non-residents who frequent the neighbourhood for business or pleasure, the remainder will be found existing almost exclusively to pander to the depraved appetites of those who can least afford to gratify them. In Great Peter Street, within 300 yards, there are nine. In the Broadway, within a radius of 200 yards, there are 12. Let it be remembered what these figures represent. Besides its casual trade, each one of these drink-shops has its regular customers, a train of victims who are ever swelling the ranks of our paupers, criminals, and lunatics. Each of these drink-shops is a separate manufactory of vice. Night by night each is turning out its troop of debased husbands, degraded wives, and brutalised children. Day by day each is absorbing the hard-earned wages, the time, and the society that should be distributed over a hundred happy homes. Oh, who shall express the multiplied misery that is wrought out in these dark blots that stud the corners and line the streets of our ancient city? Who can estimate all that

lies untold, the heathenism, wretchedness, and shame, in such a fact as the following?—On one Sunday, in February, 1877, there entered into one of these houses, by no means the largest of its class, during the seven hours in which it was open, 845 men, 407 women, 262 children, or a total of 1,514 persons. Immediately opposite this public-house there is another, almost as large. Within fifty yards there are five others. There is no reason to suppose that they did a less thriving trade. If each visit to these seven houses cost the visitor 2*d.* (the lowest possible estimate), it will be seen that nearly £90 was spent in those seven hours by those to whom the expenditure was not only a folly but a crime. How long are we to tolerate these licensed abominations? How long till an enlightened Parliament, and a fearless Bench of Magistrates, make it easy for our people to do right, and hard to do wrong?—*Church of England Temperance Chronicle.*

SMALLPOX AND VACCINATION.

THE dissemination of sound views on this matter are especially necessary at the present time, when the minds of many of the poor are being stirred up to active opposition against it. Our teachers, both week-day and Sunday, should be well informed on this matter, and, in their intercourse with the parents of the children, and with the poor generally, should use every effort to impress its importance upon them. Mr. W. F. Jebb, Clerk to the Metropolitan Asylum District, in a letter to the *Daily News*, stated as follows:—"The severe nature of the smallpox epidemic which visited London during the autumn of 1876, and prevailed with more or less intensity during the whole of 1877 and 1878 and part of 1879, induced the managers of the Metropolitan Asylum District, upon whom in their official capacity devolved the treatment of a large proportion of the infected, to collect certain statistical facts which illustrate the advantages of efficient vaccination and revaccination, as evidenced by the experiences of the medical superintendents of the several smallpox hospitals under the control of the Board. The observations of these gentlemen confirm former opinions on the subject, and establish beyond doubt the mitigating influences in smallpox cases of successful primary vaccination, and the preventive powers of efficient revaccination. The total number of smallpox patients treated in the various hospitals of the managers, from the outbreak of the epidemic in 1876 until the commencement of the

present month, has been 15,171, of whom 11,412 were vaccinated and 3,759 unvaccinated; and it is believed that for each case treated in the Board's hospitals another was privately attended; hence some idea may be formed of the magnitude of the epidemic. The total number of deaths which occurred in the hospitals during the period under consideration was 2,677. Of these 1,008 were vaccinated, and 1,669 were unvaccinated cases. The percentage mortality upon the whole of the admissions was therefore 17·6, being at the rate of 8·8 per cent. of the vaccinated, and no less than 44·4 per cent. of the unvaccinated. It may be observed that among the 11,412 vaccinated patients admitted are included the majority of those who stated that they had been vaccinated, but upon whom no traces of vaccination were discernible. No case of smallpox has come within the cognisance of either of the medical superintendents of any person who had been efficiently vaccinated and successfully revaccinated. The nurses and servants employed from time to time at the various hospitals during the epidemic have enjoyed almost absolute immunity from infection, and the few (some half-dozen amongst nearly one thousand) who contracted the disease whilst discharging their duties, had, from some cause or other, escaped revaccination before entering the wards. Experience has therefore irrefutably proved that, were vaccination efficiently performed in infancy, within the period prescribed by the Vaccination Act, and revaccination successfully accomplished at puberty, smallpox, instead of being, as it is at present, a common and extremely fatal disease, would be a comparatively rare one, and so little fatal that few, if any, deaths would result from it."

Professor Corfield, in his address at the Sanitary Institute Congress on mistakes about health, stated that one of these mistakes was the want of vaccination. Vaccination in infancy was an absolute preventive from smallpox during infancy and childhood. He thought there should be a law giving magistrates the power of vaccinating infants when their parents refused to have them operated upon. A magistrate did not like to punish a parent over and over again for the same child. Although compulsory vaccination was the law of the land, it was no offence if a child died from smallpox without having been vaccinated. He would not go into the question of what form such an offence should take, but it was a matter that required consideration.

Where this matter is disregarded, dense neighbourhoods become frightful centres of disease.

Notices of Books.

The Boy's Own Annual (price 7s. 6d.) and *The Girl's Own Annual* (price 6s.) ("Leisure Hour" Office, 56, Paternoster Row.)

The wise man says there is a time for everything, and in these books there will be found something for every time. At the banquet so amply and variously provided there is food to suit and gratify every palate. What sensible man now quarrels with a tale? The definition of a Scripture parable—that it is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning—shows how the tale in wise hands may accomplish indefinite good. Nathan, through a story, led David to pronounce his own condemnation. "History," says one, "is a fiction agreed upon," while a tale may be as true to life as the creations of the sculptor and the painter may be true to nature. These two volumes of the *Boy's* and *Girl's Own Paper* are marvels. No firm without great wealth of resource could produce them. The writing and the illustrations are of most excellent quality. There are all sorts of suggestions and devices wherewith to fill up leisure time. *Ennui* should be a thing of the past to those who consult their pages. In these days of advanced education it is a noble thing to have provided such food for quickened faculties. The volumes are bound tastefully.

Bible Light. A Magazine for Truth-seekers. Price 1d. (London: S. Haughton and Co.)

This is a capital serial, and meets a want of the time. It is printed in good bold type, and may be run through in a short ride by 'bus or rail. The topics are various and well written. They comprise, "The Bible and its Excellence," the "Inquirer's Page," "How Jesus deals with Weak Faith," "Champions for the Light," &c.

Talking to the Children. By Alexander Macleod, D.D. Eighth Edition, new and improved. Price 3s. 6d. (Hodder and Stoughton.)

Here are twenty familiar talks about topics of the deepest concern—old topics they are, but as fresh as the dewdrops of the morning. The light of genius has flooded them with radiance. They are not only excellent, but show the way to excellence. You may learn how to reimpart a bloom to topics, and facts, and stories which have become thrice-told tales. Fathers and mothers, teachers, and all interested in the young, should procure this book. The titles are taking—viz., "The Wonderful Lamp," "Children of Light," "The Bird and the Ring," "St. George and the Dragon."

Notices of Meetings.

OLD SCHOLARS' MEETING—HOPE MISSION SCHOOLS, CHEQUER ALLEY.

A large and interesting gathering took place on the evening of 26th October. It was a lively time. Husbands and wives and their little ones all conspired to give a joyousness to the occasion. The meeting between teachers and scholars was most pleasant. It was in the truest sense an old scholars' meeting. The chair was taken by Mr. E. Francis, an old scholar (now a teacher), and the meeting was addressed by several old scholars. The sending of letters to the scholars containing striking texts was shown by the experience of several to be of great spiritual service. Letters received eighteen years—even twenty-five years—previously, were referred to as containing texts which led to conversion. Mr. Moore was very happy amongst his children, and the evening was made increasingly merry with music.

OLD SCHOLARS' MEETING.

On Monday, 25th October, one of these delightful reunions was held at Hamilton Place, King's Cross. Seventy young persons sat down to a tea provided by the teachers. Many came later on. An hour was spent in friendly conversation, from which was gleaned a knowledge of some happy results that had accrued from their past labours. All were living decent lives, and some had come to Christ. Mr. Shirley presided. Mr. Reekie, the superintendent, gave the old scholars a hearty welcome. Messrs. Watson, Johnson, and Strong gave short addresses; Mr. Lyne recited, and four old scholars—Eadon, Reekie, Jones, and Garland—took part in the proceedings. On 30th November this same school held a Bazaar for the purpose of liquidating the school debt. The self-denying teachers, all of limited means, gave their time and their money towards this object, and they have met with the deserved reward. The Bazaar was opened by the Rev. S. D. Stubbs, who was supported by the Revs.—Chandler, Ellis, and other gentlemen. About £40 was taken. The net profit will set the school free from debt.

GOLDEN LANE, HATFIELD STREET.

A meeting of the teachers was held recently under the presidency of Mr. Page. After tea the teachers were invited to give a statement of their experience — the encouragements and discouragements they had met with in the course of their work. It was stated that a child having been withdrawn from the school by an ungodly mother, the teacher was warned not to visit, as she was certain of receiving abuse. In the meantime the teacher and the class earnestly prayed that the parent's opposition might be overcome. The teacher paid a visit, and found the child at home, but the mother out. The teacher invited the child to take tea with the class on the following Sunday, and left a message for the mother. The tea was well-nigh over, and all expectation had passed away, when an exclamation was raised, "Here she is,

teacher!" the child being permitted at the last moment to return. The hearts of all were made glad, and their faith was strengthened. Another teacher related that five of her class of girls attend with her a place of worship on the week evening. Mr. Page gave a very good account of a Children's Service which was held on five consecutive evenings. Mr. Ashby gave an account of a similar service held every Thursday night. Mr. R. J. Curtis expressed the pleasure he felt in finding this old institution showing no senility, but renewing its youth like the eagles.

DARBY STREET RAGGED SCHOOL.

This Institution, which continues true to its old spirit, and rejoices in its title and its work, on Wednesday evening, November 10th, gave a tea to over 100 parents, many of whom had their babies with them. The evening was made specially interesting by the presence and presidence of the Rev. S. Sandison, the newly chosen minister of the Weigh House. Young as he is, he was perfectly at home, and by his genial and unassuming manner made every one else at home also. Addresses were given by the superintendent, Mr. Dunn, by Messrs. Davis, Ebbs, Ashby, and R. J. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union. During the evening a quilt and other articles made by the Sewing Class were presented as a mark of affection to Mr. Higgins, the late superintendent. The same girls also gave a service of song (Hezekiah) most creditably. The evening was enlivened by some excellent playing on the pianoforte and some good solo singing by ladies.

CONFERENCE OF WORKERS—GRAVESEND RAGGED SCHOOL.

The winter session of this institution was inaugurated with a friendly cup of tea on the evening of Monday, 25th October.

The conductors of this Christlike work imitate their Master by caring for bodies as well as souls. Poor children during the winter months are supplied with soup dinners, and their parents also are supplied with the same nourishing diet at a small cost. Several of the committee give valuable time in the middle of the day to this service of love.

The teachers mustered well. Mr. W. G. Penman presided, and right nobly did one and another respond to the call for help. Mr. R. J. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union of London, kindly attended to aid the workers with his experience. During the short sitting arrangements were made for the conduct of the Week Evening School, Sunday Night School and Adult Service, Girls' Sewing Class, and Entertainments for Parents and Children.

LAMB AND FLAG SCHOOLS AND MISSION.

Mr. J. C. Sherrard, who is one of the magistrates for the county of Surrey, and who takes a deep interest in the poor, gave a tea to the teachers and workers in connection with the above institution, over which he presided. About sixty were present. The subject spoken of in the after-tea speeches was, "How we may best do good to the elder and rougher class of boys and girls, and counteract the evil influences by which they are almost

always surrounded." Mr. Sherrard was supported by Mr. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union, Messrs. Bray and Jeffs, of the London City Mission, &c. The chairman spoke of the pleasing sight of seeing so many united to rescue the perishing, and showed the need of unity, purpose, aim, and spirit, in carrying on the work of permeating the mind when young with Scripture truths. Mr. Curtis showed how the lessons taught in the schools were frequently carried into the homes and made a blessing there, and further exhorted the teachers to take as a goal the words, "My class for Jesus."

LIMEHOUSE RAGGED SCHOOL.

The officers, teachers, and friends of the above old-established school met in the Mitre Buildings on the 17th November. After a capital tea, provided by Mrs. Dalton, the proceedings assumed a conversational form. Mr. Thomas Dalton took the chair. It was stated by him and Mr. John Hawkins, the secretary, that every Sunday evening the school is well filled with rough lads, varying in age from twelve to twenty years; that under the management of Mrs. Dalton an excellent Mothers' Meeting is regularly conducted; that a Mission Service is held every Wednesday night by Mr. Deeks, and that a Night School for lads is very successfully conducted by a certificated master.

Mr. Mansbridge, the superintendent, stated that the school was greatly in need of teachers, and appealed to those who were not otherwise engaged to enroll themselves at once.

Mr. Curtis, from the Ragged School Union, gave the meeting the benefit of his long and varied experience.

Mr. Smith suggested that the minister and office-bearers of the Wesleyan Chapel in Three Colt Street should be requested to invite members of the congregation to give their help on Sunday evenings.

Mr. Dalton, jun., stated that he was arranging for a series of entertainments for the scholars. Money aid is much needed.

HAMMOND SQUARE, HOXTON—A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

This institution has a great record on high. Its works of faith and labours of love in years gone by brought many sons unto glory, and daughters too.

For the building and its site thanks are largely due to the Sturt family, as well as for substantial aid towards the maintenance of its many operations. Those who are at the head of affairs now hail from the old time, and are imbued with its spirit. Thus during last winter, undeterred by those who are always in haste to break with the past, they carried on a successful evening work, thus proving that it only requires the presence of loving hearts to ensure success. An average of forty-four boys and girls from thirteen to eighteen rewarded the constancy of several friends, who averaged five for the whole time. The session closed with a free tea and prize distribution.

BARKING RAGGED SCHOOL.

The annual meeting was held on Tuesday, November 2nd, in the Baptist Chapel, under the presidency of Mr. E. H. Glenny. After singing and prayer, Mr. W. Firman, the treasurer, presented a financial statement. During the year the receipts had amounted to £29 1s. 9d.,

and the expenditure to £32 1s. 7d., leaving the schools in debt £2 19s. 10d. For this small expenditure the operations of the teachers had been conducted in two localities every Sunday evening, and an attendance varying from 120 to 180 children had been secured. The chairman thought it was matter for satisfaction that those engaged in this effort *knew* their want of success in spiritual result. He felt that this non-success was partly accounted for by the material upon which they had to use their effort, for this was hard, rough, veritably heathen, and it was necessary in such circumstances to begin very low down, with the very elements of Christian teaching, and in such soil it was hardly surprising that the seed was long in germinating. Still he believed in looking for early results, for though the workers might feel their own inefficiency, yet we had the promise and power of an Almighty Saviour, with whom nothing was impossible. Rev. J. S. Vickers (Wesleyan) thought the title of Ragged School a repugnant term, though it seemed it had been a *capital* to trade upon, the very word bringing vividly to the mind the unlimited monarchy of Ragdom, with all its appalling following of misery, wretchedness, and crime. In the annals of the movement, too, what noble names were enrolled, amongst whom he would mention Guthrie, a prince on the throne of Ragdom. Mr. George Holland, of Whitechapel, pointed out various practical ways in which the friends might extend their sphere of usefulness, mentioning classes for mutual help in carpentering, turning, printing, &c.

KING EDWARD RAGGED SCHOOLS.—INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION.

Situated in the poorest part of one of the poorest districts in the metropolis, in the midst of a population struggling with the direst poverty, these schools have proved an inestimable boon to the industrious portion of this necessitous class. One of the means employed to give encouragement to the children, to stimulate them to further endeavours, and at the same time allow the public an opportunity of seeing for themselves what is being done, is to hold an annual exhibition of needlework, patchwork, models, &c., done by the scholars; and on 7th, 8th, and 9th September the twelfth exhibition came off with considerable success. The inmates of the Industrial Schools, Andrew's Road, Cambridge Heath, and Albert Street, Mile End New Town, contributed to the general collection. The girls sent in some excellent plain needlework, knitting, darning, marking, and fancy work. The fancy work, such as embroidery, tatting, and lace, was most artistic. Some pretty infants' garments in muslin and lace looked as if they had been made by fairy fingers. Among the articles sent in by the boys were some creditable specimens of cabinet work, and some very fair sketches in pencil and water colours. A large number of persons visited the exhibition on Tuesday. The school Drum and Fife Band, who are instructed by Major Wilson, of the Welsh Fusiliers, played a lively selection of music. During the evening Mr. Curtis, of the Ragged School Union, and Mr. George Tyler, addressed the spectators, and

congratulated Mr. Montague and the teachers of the schools upon the great success of the exhibition.

FLOWER SHOW—ERNEST STREET RAGGED SCHOOL AND MISSION, MILE END.

The Annual Flower Show was held on 17th September. There was a goodly show of pot-flowers, which the children had trained in their homes, while a number of tastefully arranged bouquets of cultivated and wild flowers helped to produce a very effective floral display. There was a decided preponderance of fuchsias and geraniums, while some sturdy musks and other sweet-smelling plants loaded the air with their perfume. The numerous visitors were also entertained with solos, quartets, readings, &c., given by the teachers and friends of the Mission. Prizes of books wese distributed by Mr. Innard to the successful exhibitors. The whole display reflected great credit upon the children, who had bestowed much care on these things of beauty.

DEPTFORD RAGGED SCHOOL —A NOVEL METHOD FOR PRODUCING A FLOWER SHOW.

In the spring of the present year a desire to hold a small flower-show amongst our children developed itself in the minds of some of our teachers, and steps were immediately taken to put the scheme into a tangible form. A friend undertook to have some packets of flower-seeds put up free of cost, which were distributed to the children after one of our Tuesday evening services, with a brief explanation of the way in which they were to be sown and treated, and an intimation was given that they would be called in on a future day, due notice being given, and a flower-show would be held. The results far exceeded anything we had anticipated. Six packets of seeds were distributed to each of sixty-one children, and on the evening of the show, August 12th, forty-nine pots of plants in flower grown from them were deemed by the judges worthy of reward. A few friends came to our schoolroom and helped to pass a very pleasant evening by singing and music. We hope to develop the idea to a much larger extent next year.

DEPTFORD RAGGED SCHOOL.—FAREWELL AND TESTIMONIAL TO MR. JOHN HINES.

Advantage was taken of our Teachers' Quarterly Meeting, held on Thursday, September 23rd, to present a testimonial, consisting of a clock and two ornaments and an illuminated address, to our late esteemed superintendent, Mr. John Hines, who has been compelled from failing health to remove from the neighbourhood to a warmer part of the country. Feelings of deep regret were expressed by the speakers at his retirement from the position which he had so well and faithfully filled for a period of about six years, and that God's blessing might accompany him in his new home, and that He might still use him to His own glory.

DOVE ROW RAGGED SCHOOL.

An interesting gathering of parents and scholars took place in Morley Hall, The Triangle, Hackney, on November 10, 1880. Prizes were distributed for regular attendance and for Biblical knowledge. An address was given, followed by hymns and recitations, the playing of the organ, and the Drum and Fife Band. Mr. Cotsford, Mr. Kirk, and others took part in the meeting.